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Hints to young men on the true relation

HINTS TO YOUNG MEN
ON THE
TRUE RELATION
OF THE
SEXES

JOHN WARE M.D.

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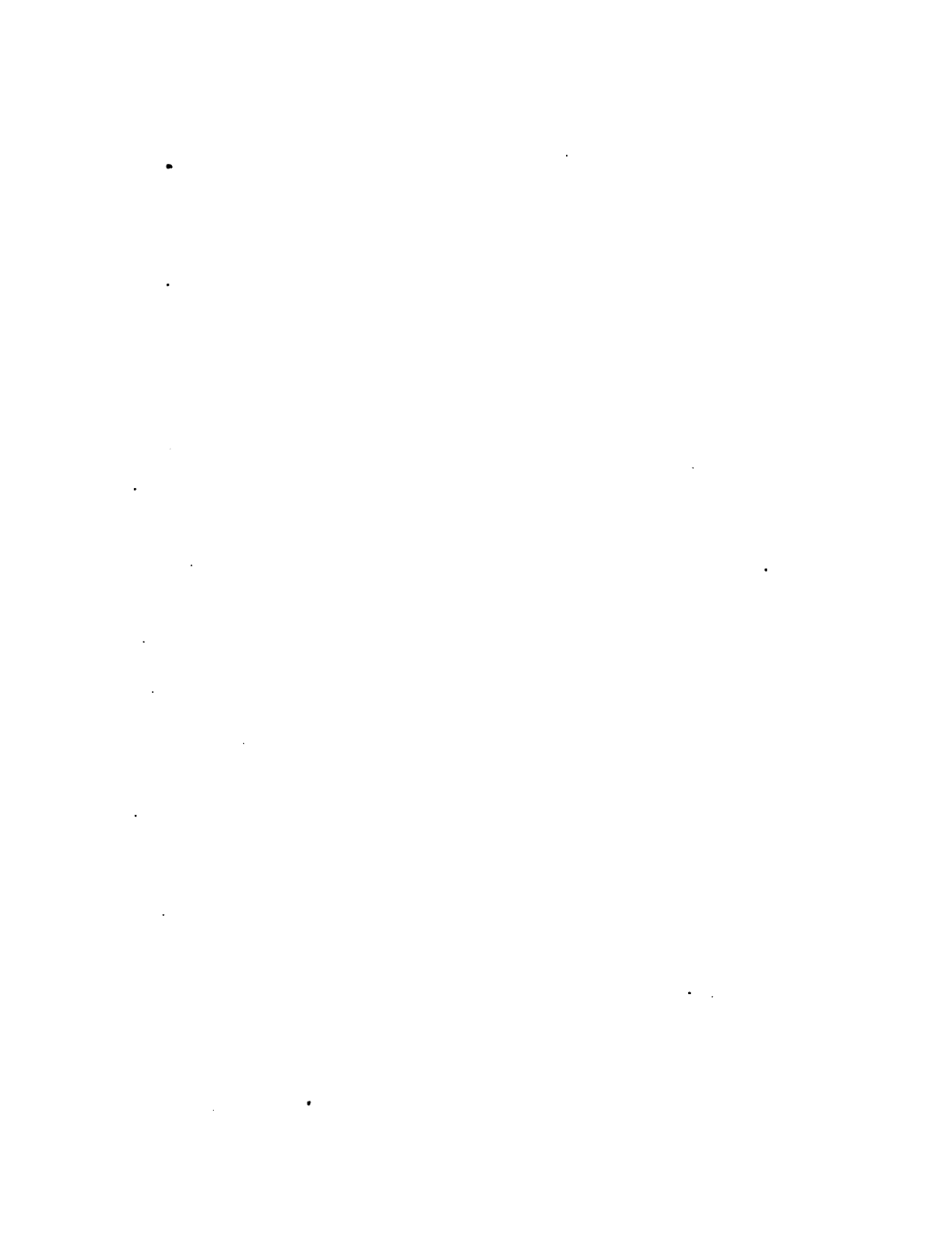
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HINTS
TO YOUNG MEN

ON THE

TRUE RELATION OF THE SEXES.

BY
JOHN WARE, M. D.

ELEVENTH EDITION.

NEW YORK

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

DURING the winter of 1847-48, many meetings were held in Boston to consider what means might be employed to lessen immorality, and promote the well-being of the young. These meetings were numerously attended, and many measures were considered. Towards the close of them, the undersigned were appointed a committee to cause a book to be prepared, which should deter from vice by a just exposition of its nature, its danger and its effects, and yet be free from the faults of other works which have recently been written for this purpose. The committee requested Dr. JOHN WARE to write such a book ; he consented to do so, and has given them this little volume.

We think it excellently well adapted to its purpose : accurate, clear, and truthful, but never offensive to modesty, nor suggestive of evil thoughts. It represents the evil effects of vice faithfully, but without the exaggeration which has sometimes prevented reform, by the belief that reform was impossible, or would be useless, and has thus produced despair instead of repentance. It places the relation of the sexes upon its true grounds ; and it arms the tempted with the strongest motives to resistance.

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We cordially recommend it to parents and others having charge of the young.

THEOPHILUS PARSONS,
SAMUEL G. HOWE,
ALEX. H. VINTON,
GEO. B. EMERSON,
J. B. WATERBURY.

Boston, *May*, 1850.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

WE have learned with great pleasure that a new edition of this little work is called for. We repeat our commendation; and ask for it a circulation which shall have some proportion to the necessity for it and the good it may do. Experience has justified the hopes we derived from the long experience of the author, from his wisdom, and from his ability to present necessary truth, concerning even a revolting subject, in a manner which reflects the purity of his own mind and character. Nor can we let this opportunity pass by, of expressing our profound sense of the loss our community has sustained in the death of one so venerated and loved, and our hope that his memory will linger among us, and prolong the usefulness of his most useful life,

THEOPHILUS PARSONS,
SAMUEL G. HOWE,
ALEX. H. VINTON,
GEO. B. EMERSON,
J. B. WATERBURY.

Boston, *April*, 1866.

THE
TRUE RELATION OF THE SEXES.

It seems unfortunate that the propensity of our natures which we find most difficult to control and which, when uncontrolled, is sure to be the source of the greatest physical and moral evil, is that whose regulation is left most completely to chance, or at least to the influence of circumstances in the progress of life, that we can do very little to modify. It is hardly necessary to say that reference is made

to the propensity which grows out of the distinction of the sexes. The formation of the character of young persons, in this very important moral relation, is seldom the object of care, instruction, or forethought. It is not often, indeed, impressed on their minds that this propensity has, like all others, a moral relation. They are left to find this out by accident, if they find it out at all. There is a striking contrast between the training of children in regard to this, and in regard to other points of their moral characters. The distinctions between right and wrong, virtue and vice, are among the earliest lessons which are taught them. The

love of truth, honesty, charity, kindness, is carefully cultivated, and enforced in a thousand ways, by parents, friends, and instructors, at home, at school, and in the intercourse of life. With their prayers at the mother's knee, children are taught to shun evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions. The nature of our bad propensities, their sinfulness, the means of conquering them, are plainly and fully dwelt upon. The dangers under which we lie from hatred, envy, malice, anger, covetousness, worldliness, are distinctly pointed out to us. But, in regard to this particular propensity, an utter silence is maintained. Our whole

moral education is as if from this no danger were to be apprehended. We are left to enter into the midst of the fearful temptations which are to assail us, unwarned, uninformed; or, if informed, informed wholly by those who have been uninstructed themselves, and have found their way instinctively, or else have been themselves led to the evil which attaches to the most mysterious and ungovernable of the animal appetites. In short we are left to receive our first impressions on this subject from our companions; from those who are only a few years older in years, or in experience, than ourselves. Under these circumstances, it

is but little doubtful what the lessons we receive will be ; whether our first impressions will be pure or impure ; whether our earliest notion of the relation of the sexes will be that of beings associated together for the mere purpose of sensual indulgence, or for the higher object of a moral and intellectual union ; a union of affection and reason, to which the physical relation is only subservient.

There is ground to fear, then, that the teaching on this very important topic is wholly in the hands of those whose ideas in regard to it are low and gross. To have any ideas concerning it at all, in younger life, is

probably to have those which are impure. As things now are, the best we can hope of the young is, that they have none at all; that it has never been made the subject of conversation or thought; that this part of our nature has been left in that undeveloped state in which it exists in infancy and childhood; that the attention has never been called to it; and, except for the influences under which we are so early placed, this might be the case for a long period of our lives; for the time of its development, and the strength of the passions which are connected with it, depend very much on the degree in which we are exposed to causes of excitement and solicitation.

It is the opinion of many that this subject is too delicate and difficult to be presented with advantage, or even with safety, to the minds of the young; that, to inform them concerning it is to expose them to its dangers; that, since the purest minds are those which dwell least upon it, it is wisest to leave the young, as nearly as possible, in this state of purity, and trust to the chances of life that it may remain so. By seeking to enlighten, we may lead the thoughts where it is always dangerous for them to wander, and rouse sentiments which might otherwise slumber till the period of life arrives when it is right they should be developed. But,

putting aside the question whether we ought to hide this subject wholly from the young if we could, the truth, it is to be feared, is, that we cannot if we would. Admitting it to be desirable, every man of experience in life will pronounce it to be impracticable. Most men who refer to the recollections of boyhood must remember, unless they have been singularly favored in early life, that this subject was brought to their notice by older companions, and made familiar in many ways, long before it could have been suggested by the development of their own bodies, or the unfolding of their own instincts. If, then, we cannot prevent

the minds of children from being engaged in some way on this subject, may it not be better to forestall evil impressions by implanting good ones ; or, at least, to mingle such good ones with the evil, as the nature of the case admits ? Let us be at least as wise as the crafty adversary of man, and cast in a little wheat with his tares ; and among the most effectual methods of doing this is to impart to the young just and religious views of the nature and purposes of the relation which the Creator has established between the two sexes.

This distinction of sex we find, more or less perfectly exhibited, running through the whole of living nature,

both animal and vegetable. Indeed, we perceive an analogy with it in some of the relations of inorganic bodies. In all living things below ourselves, the direct, and, so far as we can judge, the final, purpose of this provision is, the continuation of the several species of animals and vegetables; but, in the constitution of society in our own race, we find it connected with other and far higher objects, and also susceptible of a debasement to far lower.

It is a part of the wise and beautiful ordination of Providence, growing out of the double nature of man as both an animal and a moral being, — a mortal and an immortal, — that his

gross appetites, as we are apt to call them. primarily subservient to the continuance, the support, the purposes, the gratification of his animal nature, are also made necessary to the development of his moral and intellectual. This great truth, thus briefly stated, is capable, with advantage to the subject before us, of further illustration.

The appetites of hunger and thirst man shares with other animals, and their ultimate object is the same in him as in them. They lead to an indulgence which supports the life of the individual, but still no animal has in view this direct purpose; he takes food because he is hungry, and for

the pleasure of eating, and not in order to preserve his existence. The same is the case with man till he becomes a reasonable being, and learns by experience the connection between the taking of food and the maintenance of life and strength. Even then, the first idea before him at his meals is not this great purpose, but simply the gratification of his appetite. So much is this the case, that few men are capable of systematically denying the appetite, even where they know that its real object — the healthy nutrition of their bodies — is defeated by its indulgence. Providence has not, therefore, left the preservation of our lives

to our intelligence, our reason, our forethought; but intrusted it to an appetite of the most imperious nature, resistance to which is absolutely painful. It is not to preserve our lives, it is not from the fear of death, that we eat; we eat because we cannot endure the pangs of an unsatisfied appetite. Many who have desired death, and sought it by starvation, have been forced to yield their resolution to the compulsory nature of this feeling.

Food, then, is taken chiefly for the gratification it affords. This is not only one of the most vivid of our gratifications, but its frequent recurrence makes it the most important. It gives

occasion indirectly to a great part of the labor and occupation of mankind. We study to enhance and vary the pleasure which it affords. Hence all the variety of food in form, in kind, and in modes of cookery. The world is ransacked for new delicacies, intercourse between nations becomes established, commerce arises, ships and cities are built, canals and railroads come into existence. Beside all this, mankind becomes fastidious in other things, which gradually connect themselves with the business of eating. The manner becomes luxurious, as well as the material. Arts of various kinds, and to an indefinite extent, connect themselves with it.

The poor man's table, even, is spread with articles brought from every quarter of the globe; but the rich man's establishment calls in request not only the productions of every clime but the labor of almost every form of human industry. The preparation of his food requires an extensive laboratory, to the arrangement of which a variety of the mechanic arts contribute. His apartments for taking his meals are furnished by the skill of another set of artisans. His tables are set forth with vessels of gold, silver, steel, glass, and porcelain, the combined labor of innumerable craftsmen. The turtle from which his soup is made

has been brought alive over the circuit of half the globe. His fish is a turbot which has crossed the Atlantic packed in ice, or a salmon transported some hundreds of miles by railroad ; his beef, his mutton, his poultry, have come to him in the same way ; he has a ham from Westphalia, a buffalo's tongue from the Rocky Mountains ; he seasons them with French mustard, pepper from the East, and cayenne from the West Indies. France or Spain furnishes him with olives, England or Holland with cheese ; his raisins are from Malaga, his figs from Smyrna, his almonds from the Levant, his oranges from Sicily, and his pines from Cuba.

His ale has been brewed from the water of the Thames, his Maida, first matured for years in his own cellar, has then crossed the ocean, to be mellowed by the continued agitation of its waves, and refined by the heat of a tropical climate. He concludes his repast with a cup of Mocha coffee from a China cup. Should thirst annoy him, the glass of water which is to quench it has perhaps been brought almost to his lips by an aqueduct built at an expense of millions, and is cooled by ice which, though it may have been got within a few miles of his own door, is transported for other epicures across the ocean. This view only shows the

22 TRUE RELATION OF THE SEXES.

variety, and not the extent, of the labor, ingenuity, and enterprise which are called out in connection with the necessity of supplying this great animal want. If we look at the occupations of a large proportion of mankind, we shall find that they grow, directly or indirectly, out of this single appetite for food and drink ; an appetite which, were its absolute necessities alone considered, may be satisfied by a few roots or wild fruits, a few shellfish, and a draught of water.

But these are only the more direct effects. The commerce and traffic which gradually arise for the supply of this want, of course feed the nat-

ural love of man for acquisition. He becomes wealthy; with increased means come increased wants, new tastes, various refinements of living; and thus the elegancies of life, art, and literature have gradually grown out of a state of things originally brought about in the way that has been indicated.

It is hardly necessary to say that this is only one of the animal necessities which indirectly have created the occupations, produced the wealth, and controlled the whole character of human society. The necessity for clothing, for sleep, for habitations, has done its part, and it would be easy to

24 TRUE RELATION OF THE SEXES.

show how these wants, so simple in themselves, and demanding so little originally for their supply, have now become so complicated as to require, like the want of food, an extensive array of means for their accommodation.

The whole fabric of society, as it now exists, seems, then, to have been created by these few simple animal wants. Supposing mankind to have been contented with their gratification in the simplest possible manner, it is manifest that they could never have emerged from the savage to the civilized condition; that neither arts, literature, nor science, could have existed as

they now exist. The grand motive to all exertion would have been wanting.

But this is only one of the views which this subject presents. There is still a higher connection of this appetite with our moral nature. There is a relation, very distinct, between the gratification of the appetite for food and the state of the bodily organs, which digest it, and our social feelings. This has been always recognized.

Eating together has always been, among mankind, a token and an expression of mutual regard. The recurrence of the domestic meal is the chief means which keeps up the constant intercourse of families; it pro-

motes domestic peace and love. In all communities, an invitation to his own hospitable board, or to a public feast, has been the way in which man is most ready to express love, or confer honor.

There is, perhaps, some deep relation of this to the hidden parts of our nature. It may seem to many a humiliating acknowledgment, but it certainly would appear that the state of the spiritual man has some not very remote connection with the state of the natural man in this great particular. It is not impossible, indeed, that the relation which has been referred to may point to some analogy between this source of

gratification and the results connected with it, and those which may be accorded to us in the spiritual state of our being.

There is an opposite side to this picture. Whatever is capable of being used for good is also capable of being abused for evil. Instead of rising above the brutes in our relation to this appetite, we sometimes sink beneath them, to the degradation equally of our physical and moral nature. Gluttony, intemperance, excess, lead to disease, death, and crime. The improvement and the degradation of the race, elevated virtue and base crimes, are thus the result of the use and abuse of a propensity which is in

itself of merely a negative character. In the same way, the distinction between the sexes among animals and man has been established primarily to insure the one great physical object of the continuance of the races, as the appetite for food does the continuance of the individual. This purpose is common to man and to brutes. But, like the appetite for food, it is capable of having other and far more important influences on his character and happiness. If viewed in its true relation, it becomes the source of his highest moral elevation and his purest enjoyments ; if in its false, its indulgence degrades him below the level of the brutes.

The distinction of the sexes in our own species, and the connection which consequently exists between them, lies at the very foundation of all that is most desirable, endearing, and ennobling among mankind. The permanent union of one man with one woman establishes a relation of affections and interests which can in no other way be made to exist between two human beings. Without it no individual can be considered as having answered the whole purpose of his existence; of having arrived at the full development of which his character is capable. He is incomplete and imperfect. He has tendencies, capaci-

ties, powers for good, which have never been called out, which he may not even know to exist. Domestic life, and the domestic relations, are the essential element of human happiness and human progress, so far as our moral and spiritual character are concerned. From this source proceeds our purest happiness, and upon it depend our highest motives to goodness and improvement. From the relation of the sexes springs all that gives its charm, its grace, its true value to human intercourse. It creates the domestic circle. It gives origin to the sacred relations of husband and wife, parent and child,

brother and sister. Without it there were no families, no relations, and none of those thousand endearing and elevating associations which arise from them. Without it where were the cause of education, of improvement, of progress? Strike out from the life of man all the hopes, interests, and motives which grow out of this relation, and what were left him but a cheerless, a desolate, and a merely brutal existence? But this is not all; it would deprive him not merely of that which is most valuable in his present state of existence, it would destroy also one of the strong incentives to virtue and religion. To

a well-regulated and religious mind, one of the most cherished of the hopes of a future life is that which promises the continuance and perpetuity of the affections and relations which have constituted the happiness of this.

The appetite that continues the species is then, ultimately, the condition on which depends the moral and spiritual development of our race ; just as it is the appetite that continues the individual on which depends its material advancement. But as, on the one hand, such are the results of the distinction of the sexes when considered in its true relation, opposite ones

follow whenever it is regarded in a false one. Both in communities and individuals does this hold true. As there are no virtues more engaging than those which flow from the union of the sexes, when viewed in its true light, and under its true relations, so there are no vices more disgusting than those which have their origin in false views concerning it. No individual is so degraded as the habitual sensualist. No community is so debased, so enervated, so dead to the higher impulses of our nature, so difficult to be excited by truly noble motives, as that in which this relation is misunderstood, prostituted, and perverted.

These statements are made in order to impress as strongly as possible upon the minds of the young, that the appetite of the sexes is not intended merely as a means of sensual gratification, nor even for the mere physical purpose of the continuance of the race; but that it has a higher object. It is the basis of a relation of one human being to another which is necessary to the perfect development of the character of each; it creates other relations of individuals to each other, which are necessary not only to their pleasures, their happiness, but also to their advancement in knowledge, virtue, and religion. The con-

nections which grow out of it are an essential condition to the constitution of human society, and may be regarded, so far as we can judge, as permanent in their character, and as extending over our whole future existence.

Let the young man begin life with this elevated view of his relation to the other sex, and he is armed with a feeling and a principle which will always aid him in resisting temptation. It may not be always strong enough to preserve him from transgression, but he will at least never transgress without compunction. It will keep his conscience tender. It will never permit

him to regard any offences of this kind as venial, and especially never to look upon licentious habits in that trifling manner which is so often the case among the young and thoughtless.

Unhappily for the young, this just and elevated view of the relation of man to woman is forestalled by impressions of a totally different sort, early made and deeply rooted. Among the first lessons which boys learn of their fellows are impurities of language; and these are soon followed by impurities of thought. Foul words are in use among them before they can actually comprehend their origin, or attach to them any definite meaning.

Most men who, when young, have been in the habit of unreserved communication with others of their own sex, will recognize the truth of this statement. Happy is he who can look back upon no such recollections; happy is he, the surface of whose mind does not bear upon it through life stains which were impressed thereon by the corrupt associations and the corrupt habits of youth; happy indeed is he if the evil have not eaten into the soul itself, and left behind it such marks of its corrosion as neither time nor even repentance can ever obliterate. When this is the training of boyhood, it is not strange that the

predominating ideas among young men, in relation to the other sex, are too often those of impurity and sensuality. Nor is this evil confined to large cities, though it there manifests itself more distinctly in open and undisguised licentiousness, and in the illicit commerce of the sexes. It equally exists in the most secluded village in the corruption of the thoughts and language, and in modes of indulgence, which, if less obvious and remarked, are not, therefore, the less dangerous to moral purity.

We cannot be surprised, then, that the history of most young men is, that they yield to temptation in a

greater or less degree, and in different ways. With many, no doubt, the indulgence is transient, accidental, and does not become habitual. It does not get to be regarded as venial. It is never yielded to without remorse. The wish and the purpose is to resist, but the animal nature bears down the moral. Still transgression is always followed by grief and repentance. With too many, however, it is to be feared, it is not so. The mind has become debauched by the dwelling of the imagination on licentious images, and by indulgence in licentious conversation. There is no wish to resist. They are not over-

taken by temptation, for they seek it. With them the transgression becomes habitual, and the stain on the character is deep and lasting. The prevailing sentiment of the mind, the prevailing tendency of the will, is to sensual vices; and there are no vices which so deeply contaminate the soul of man, so degrade, so brutalize it, as these. The degree of debasement has in some men, even in some communities, reached so low as to suggest modes of indulging this appetite from which the common sensualist shrinks with horror, and which cannot be even named without loathing.

The most perfect safeguard against

sensuality in the young, is, doubtless, to be found in the cultivation of such a purity of spirit as will lead them to revolt at all indulgences which are not within the limits prescribed by the laws of God, and which are not sanctified by a higher sentiment than that of mere animal passion. But situated as we are in youth, — exposed to the early pollution of our thoughts; tempted where resistance is the most difficult, and control the most rare, — it is seldom that the evil can thus be forestalled by good impressions. The task is too often rather to remove evil than to anticipate it. The physical tendencies are excited and perverted,

before moral discipline is begun, — nay, even before the individual is capable of it. Our work, then, is one of reformation; and to effect this we must look for many other motives beside those of the highest and purest character. Among these subsidiary motives, none have so lively an influence as those which are derived from what experience teaches of the deplorable results of early sensual excess upon our physical condition and development.

All testimony is united upon this one point — of the imminent danger to the health of early sexual indulgence. Neither is it alone the imme-

diate production of disease which is to be feared; the constitution may be ultimately and irreparably injured without this. The perfect development of our bodies, their firm and thorough organization, are prevented by it. Nothing tends more certainly to wither the energies of youth and blast the hopes of manhood. It is not merely that the mind is polluted; the body is enervated. A thousand forms of disease may hang round the victim; imbitter his existence, or destroy his hopes in life, which he never imagines to have had such an origin. But even further than this; Providence seems to have stamped this vice

with more than its ordinary token of displeasure, by rendering its votaries liable to that terrible disease from which so few of them ultimately escape. The effects of this disease, as is well known, are not always to be eradicated. They are not confined to present suffering. They may set a mark upon a man as indelible as that of Cain. They may cling to him through life, may destroy his health, undermine his constitution, hasten his death — may even terminate in disfigurement and mutilation. Nay, they may even so taint his blood as to descend to his very offspring, and inflict upon another generation the

fearful consequences of his transgression.

There is another form of sensuality, far more common among the young, it is to be feared, than that of which we have been speaking, and equally demanding notice — the solitary indulgence of the same propensity. This is resorted to from different motives. With many there is no opportunity for the natural gratification of their appetites: some are deterred from such gratification by the fear of discovery, regard for character, or a dread of disease; others there are whose consciences revolt at the idea of licentious intercourse, who yet addict

themselves to this practice with the idea that there is in it less of criminality. It is to be apprehended, however, that its commencement can usually be traced to a period of life when no such causes can have been in operation. It is begun from imitation, and taught by example, long before the thoughts are likely to have been exercised, with regard either to its dangers or its criminality.

The prevalence of this vice among boys, there is great reason to believe, has very much to do with the great amount of illicit indulgence which exists among young men. The one bears the same relation to the other,

in a certain sense, that moderate drinking does to intemperance. It prepares the way, it excites the appetite, it debauches the imagination. There is little doubt that it is often, if not commonly, begun at a period of life when the natural appetite does not, and should not, exist. It is solicited, — prematurely developed ; it is almost created. On every account, then, this practice in the young demands especial notice. It is the great corrupter of the morals of our youth, as well as a frequent destroyer of their health and constitution. Could it be arrested, the task of preventing the more open form of licentiousness

would be comparatively easy ; for it creates and establishes, at a very early age, a strong physical propensity, an animal want of the most imperious nature, which, like the longing of the intemperate man, it is almost beyond human power to overcome. The brute impulse becomes a habit of nearly irresistible force before the reason is instructed as to its injurious influence on the health, or the conscience awakened as to its true character as a sin.

The deleterious, the sometimes appalling, consequences of this vice upon the health, the constitution, the mind itself, are some of the common

matters of medical observation. The victims of it should know what these consequences are ; for, to be acquainted with the tremendous evils it entails, may assist them in the work of resistance. These consequences are various in degree and in permanency, according to the extent to which the indulgence is carried, and also according to the constitution of different individuals. But there is probably no extent which is not in some degree injurious.

Among the effects of this habit, in ordinary cases, we notice an impaired nutrition of the body ; a diminution of the rotundity which belongs to

childhood and youth ; a general lassitude and languor, with weakness of the limbs and back ; indisposition and incapacity for study or labor ; dulness of apprehension ; a deficient power of attention ; dizziness ; headaches ; pains in the sides, back, and limbs ; affections of the eyes. In cases of extreme indulgence, these symptoms become more strongly marked, and are followed by others. The emaciation becomes excessive ; the bodily powers become more completely prostrated ; the memory and the whole mind partake in the ruin ; and idiocy or insanity, in their most intractable forms, close the train of evils. It not

WASHER : 2941

unfrequently happens that, from the consequences of this vice when carried to an extreme, not even repentance and reformation liberate the unhappy victim.

Let no one say that we overstate the extent of this evil, or exaggerate its importance to the health and morals of the young. It is in vain that we attempt to stay the licentiousness of youth, when we leave, unchecked in their growth, those seeds of the vice which are sown in the bosom of the child. If there is impurity in the fountain, there will be impurity in the stream which flows from it. To what purpose is it that we make and execute

laws against open licentiousness ; that we arm ourselves with policemen and spies ; that we prosecute the keepers of brothels ; that we hunt the wretched prostitute from the dram-shop to the cellar, from the cellar to the jail, from the jail to her grave ? This does not purify society ; it stops merely one external development of a corruption which still lurks, and cankers, and festers within. The licentiousness of the brothel is clear and open in its character ; nobody defends it ; every one is aware of its seductions and its dangers ; the young man who enters the house of shame knows that he does it at the peril of reputation, and

under the dread of disease. But the other form of licentiousness is secret from its very nature. It may be practised without suspicion ;—there is little fear of discovery or of shame. It lurks in the school, the academy, the college, the workshop, ay, even in the nursery. No age and no profession are without examples of the dreadful ruin it can accomplish. Begun in childhood, and sometimes even in infancy, it is indulged without a thought of its nature or its effects. Gradually it winds around its unhappy victim a chain which he finds it impossible to break. Continued for years, he may wake, at last, to a sense of his degra-

dation, but perhaps too late; for it has often happened that neither the pressure of disease, the stings of conscience, a strong sense of religious obligation, nor even the fear of death, have been sufficient to enable the unhappy sufferer to break from the habit which inthrals him.

None but those who go behind the scenes of life, and are permitted to enter the prison-house of the human heart, can know how many are the terrible secrets which lie hid beneath the fair and even face of society, as we see it in the common intercourse of the world. With how many are their early days a struggle for life and

death between principle and passion, the spirit and the flesh ! With how many are those days spent in yielding and repenting, in reluctant indulgences followed by agonies of remorse and shame ! With how many does the conscience become callous, and vice a second nature ! How often has it happened that natures, really fair and pure, have gradually become tarnished and dim, and the highest hopes of youth been defeated ! How often has it happened that young men of rare promise, of whose success great expectations have been entertained, have suddenly failed by the way, have seemed prematurely worn down by

study, and forced to relinquish the career on which they were entering with the brightest prospects! Little is it suspected by anxious friends, or a sympathizing public, in such cases, that it is not too exclusive devotion to study; that it is not midnight toil; that it is not errors of diet, or want of air or exercise, that have withered their energies, and unnerved their frame. There may be a nearer and a more inevitable destroyer than these.

This is a subject most painful to dwell upon; one upon which it is hard to think, to speak, or to write, without seeming to partake in some measure of its pollution. Still attention to it

is vital to any successful effort to arrest the vices of impurity. The evils which are directly inflicted upon the health, the physical development, the constitution, by these secret practices, are enough in themselves to command our interest; but, as already intimated, they indirectly lead to and promote, the greater evils of promiscuous licentiousness. It sometimes happens that the habit is acquired by accident, or persons of a peculiar temperament are led to it by a spontaneous impulse. More frequently, however, it is taught by one generation to that which follows; and so general is this education of evil, that it is rare to find those

who have been fortunate enough to escape wholly from its contamination. Unhappily the physical pollution is not all; for, as a matter 'almost of course, there are associated with it loose conversations, licentious imaginations, and low ideas of the relation of the sexes. It leads to the reading of obscene, or at least voluptuous books, gazing upon pictures of the same description, and to general licentiousness of thought and of language. It is not strange, when the mind is thus filled with such images, and taught to dwell upon and brood over them in the immature period of youth, that this part of our nature should be-

prematurely and unnaturally developed; and that the opportunities of more advanced years should lead to that state of morals among young men which is so notorious, and so much to be deplored.

Is it not obvious, then, where the remedy is to be applied, if, indeed a remedy be possible? Is it not obvious that our success must be small indeed if we confine ourselves to means intended to check the overt indulgences of maturity in licentiousness in one generation, whilst those who are to constitute the next are left to the same fearful development of their animal passions, which must lead them on,

by steps as certain as the grave, in the same career of indulgence?

But, as in all other cases, it is easier to show that a remedy is needed than to discover and apply it. In this case, indeed, we encounter the most difficult question presented to us in the moral education of our race. At the early age at which the evil begins to exist, when it is gradually creeping into the thoughts and habits of the child, how are we to detect and counteract it? In the present state of the relations between the old and the young, between parents and children, this is a task of extreme delicacy. It can only be done by the judicious observation

and management of the associations, the conversation, the intercourse, the amusements, and the habits of children from their earliest days, both in families and in schools. But alas! how few parents, how few instructors, have the knowledge the discretion, the tact, the judgment, to qualify them for such an office! How often must those who are fully aware of their duty shrink from its performance, from the apprehension that they may suggest, instead of preventing, the evil they fear!

At a later period of life, the attempt to counteract the tendency to sensual indulgence is also encompassed with great difficulties, though there is

less embarrassment as to the exact means which are to be put in force to accomplish the object. At this age, we are to depend not so much upon the watchful care of others as upon the establishment in the mind of the young man himself of a principle of resistance founded upon reason and conscience. We can often succeed in doing this, and although, where the mind and body have both been debauched by early training, the mind filled with impure images, and the body stimulated by unnatural gratification, the struggle is painful, and often protracted, yet is it frequently effectual.

The young man who becomes sensible of the dangers to which he is exposed, should fortify himself by every motive that can aid him in his endeavor to escape them. A regard to reputation, the fear of disease, may do much to restrain, and these are considerations not unworthy of regard ; but the surest safeguard is to be found in the cultivation of an internal principle of resistance to evil because it is evil. Much may be done by those who sincerely aim to save themselves from these early temptations by a sedulous discipline of the thoughts, and a corresponding carefulness of words. Thoughts lead to words, and

words lead to thoughts; both are liable to be consummated in actions. Purity of language in the intercourse of society should be regarded as an essential quality of the gentleman, and the want of it exclude him from good company as much as any other vulgar habit.

Another safeguard is to be found in the cultivation of a just perception of the true relation of the sexes. Let the young man cherish a high estimate of, and a reverence for, the character of the true and pure woman, and a corresponding detestation and horror of her who abuses and prostitutes the privileges of her sex. Such a view

of this relation as has been inculcated, if it be fully appreciated and heartily received, will lead him to regard a legitimate and permanent union with one of the other sex as the most desirable object in life, and will fill him with a loathing for any other than such a union. The young man who looks forward with honorable feelings to such a connection with a congenial and virtuous woman, will find in the hopes and prospects which it opens to him in life, the surest defence against the temptations which continually assail him from without and from within.



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